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AN ANCIENT SCHOOLMASTER'S MESSAGE TO PRESENT-DAY TEACHERS¹

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So far as ancient literature makes an effective appeal to the modern mind, it is chiefly in the field which De Quincey characterizes as "the literature of power." Here the antique genius is supreme. It has been recognized as such for centuries, and a priori reasons can easily be given why it will continue to be recognized as such in the ages that are to come. Homer's majestic epics (*pace* Andrew Carnegie) not only have never been surpassed or even rivaled, but probably never can be; the same is true of the most perfect products of Greek tragedy; and almost the same of the best of Horace's lyric verse.

In the other field, however—the field that De Quincey characterizes as "the literature of knowledge"—the Greek and Roman classics exercise a much less decisive and much narrower influence. I refer to such works as Aristotle's treatises on logic, ethics, psychology, and the natural sciences; such as Cicero's tractates on oratory, theology, rhetoric, and politics; to such works as Pliny's *Natural History*, or Quintilian's *Institutio Oratoria*; further, to that vast body of works that are primarily historical or have historical bearings, like the correspondence of Cicero or Pliny. Except to the special student of the classics, most of these works make now but a relatively small appeal. Naturally enough, too, for their connection with the present is less obvious. Homer, Virgil, Aeschylus, Horace are for all time; whereas ancient history and institutions are no longer to most persons a vital concern of the life and action of today. The multifarious problems of the modern world—social, governmental, religious, educational—all differ so profoundly from the problems of the ancients in the same fields, that we seldom think of invoking their testimony or of utilizing

¹ President's address before the American Philological Association at a joint meeting of the association and the Archaeological Institute of America at the University of Toronto, December 1908.

their experience. As a rule we are undoubtedly correct in this attitude. And yet, occasionally, even in the midst of our latter-day perplexities, we may with profit call these thinkers of the past into council. It is to a case of this kind that I venture to invite your attention now. The field is the perennially interesting one of education, and the witness is Quintilian.

Before touching upon the points which I desire to single out from his monumental work, may I ask you briefly to recall with me the main circumstances of his career? Born at Calagurris, in Spain, about 35 A. D., he was one of that brilliant group of Spanish provincials whose literary activity shed such luster on Roman letters in the second half of the first century. After the Renaissance of the Augustan Age, literature had sunk almost to its lowest ebb, when new light dawned in provincial Spain. Four names are at once associated with this revival, Seneca, Lucan, Martial, and Quintilian, all notable writers and all represented today by fitting monuments of their activity. Of this company, Seneca was by far the most versatile. Not content with cultivating the field of philosophy, he essayed with success that of natural science, and, less happily, that of tragedy. Lucan gave us the *Pharsalia*, which, though incomplete and highly tinged with the overwrought rhetoric of the day, is still full of true fire and spirit. Martial's Epigrams are unique in Roman literature. They give us wit, the acutest observation of the social life of the day, and not seldom the tenderest pathos.

It was to this original and virile group that Quintilian belonged. All its members brought fresh life and energy into the sorely jaded body of Roman letters—Quintilian quite as much as the other members of this Spanish school.

His early life was passed at Rome, where he studied under Remmius Palaemon, a somewhat spectacular personage, not without a touch of the charlatan, yet withal a born schoolmaster and a skilful instructor. Later he became a pupil of Domitius Afer, eminent alike as a teacher of oratory and as one of the most forceful speakers at the Roman bar of Nero's day.

Returning to Spain after the completion of his studies, Quintilian met Galba and came back to the capital with him in 68. Here he was appointed the first public professor of rhetoric at Rome, receiving

a regular salary from the imperial treasury. With these official duties he combined the profession of advocate. Among his pupils were certainly the younger Pliny, very likely Tacitus, and possibly Juvenal. This dual activity of advocate and rhetorical teacher continued for some twenty years, at the close of which period Quintilian withdrew into private life and addressed himself to the composition of his memorable work, the *Institutio Oratoria*. It was while engaged in this task that the emperor Domitian confided to his care the education of his grand-nephews, heirs prospective to the imperial throne. As a further token of imperial favor, Quintilian was honored with the consulship. Outwardly, to all appearances, his life was most prosperous; yet within the domestic circle Fortune had laid her heavy hand upon him more than once. Death took first his wife and then both his sons, leaving him in his last years alone and desolate. He himself died shortly before the close of the first century A. D.

So much for the man. Let us now turn to his work. The *Institutio Oratoria*, as we have seen, was the ripe product of a gifted teacher, who had himself been trained by the best masters of his day, had practiced in the Roman courts, enjoyed the confidence of several emperors, and had been honored with the highest magistracy. For twenty years he had been the recognized leader among teachers at Rome, when at the age of fifty-eight he set out to put in permanent form the results of his practical experience and his mature reflections on the training of the orator. Clearly we have much to expect from a man so exceptionally fitted for the task he sets himself; nor shall we be disappointed when we come to examine his treatise more closely.

The title of the work, as is well recognized, is somewhat narrower than its contents warrant. Technically it is on the training of the orator; but in reality it is much broader and deeper than its name implies. It penetrates to the root of many of the fundamental problems of education, problems that not merely confronted the Romans of Quintilian's day, but which confront us also, and will confront our children's children. It is this that bears the *Institutio Oratoria* far beyond the "bourne of time and place" and gives it permanent worth; and it is this fact that has made me venture to make its author the subject of these remarks. What I shall try to do is simply to

enumerate some of the elementary truths of education as Quintilian himself has stated them, with true Roman wisdom and practical sense.

And first of all he emphasizes the importance of beginning aright and of employing only the best teachers from the very outset of education. "Would Philip of Macedon" he asks, "have wished Aristotle, the greatest teacher of the age, to teach Alexander, or would Aristotle have done it, if they had not both been persuaded that the first rudiments of instruction are best imparted by the most accomplished teacher?" How often have I thought of this when some mediocre Latin scholar has come to me at the end of the senior year and asked for a recommendation to teach elementary Latin, admitting defective knowledge and poor scholarship, but urging the low grade of work contemplated in justification of the application. Let me here record my conviction that a college graduate who has been a poor Latin scholar in college is not fit to teach even elementary Latin. In fact such a person is conspicuously unfit for such labor, not so much from lack of large attainment as from lack of the spirit that a good scholar inevitably takes into the classroom and implants in his pupils. Only the lover of accuracy will beget a love of accuracy in his pupils, and without this there can be no scholarship—no really excellent instruction. If education is not to become a meaningless thing among us, it must be taken very seriously; and the prospective teacher must dedicate his whole energy to the profession he chooses. Teaching cannot safely be made a makeshift. Any such attitude involves disaster to the individual who risks the experiment, to the pupils under him, and, above all, to the community, and ultimately to the national life.

Some twenty years ago we used to hear much of the Quincy method of teaching. But when one came to analyze the "Quincy Method," its essence proved to be simply this: An enlightened community had determined to get the very best. It paid for it, of course. But the "Quincy Method" was but a nineteenth-century application of the wise words of Quintilian, uttered eighteen centuries earlier: "Get the best!" "He who is unwilling to teach the little things," declares Quintilian, "is not worthy the name of teacher. It is the ablest teachers who can teach the little things best; for they have had to master them to attain their eminence." He urges, moreover, a special psychological

reason for beginning the right way. It is this: "We can change easily enough from good to bad; but the reverse process is well-nigh impossible." It was on this principle that the flute-player, Timotheus, demanded twice as high tuition of those who had studied under other teachers as from those whom he himself had trained from the beginning. We find it, indeed, a Herculean task to unlearn our errors, particularly errors that have become impressed upon our minds when the intellect is plastic and when the impressions recorded are almost indelible. All of us have had telling illustrations of this truth, as we have wrestled with the results of our own imperfect early training or when as teachers we have been embarrassed by the same thing in our pupils. As year after year I meet a considerable body of freshmen, incapable of pronouncing Latin accurately, only half sure of their inflections, and equipped with but the scantiest syntactical knowledge, incapable of giving or even of appreciating a really accurate and idiomatic translation—as I meet this annual contingent, it is with more than passing regret. These students, as a rule, are not lacking in ability or in industry. They are simply the living illustration of bad teaching. When they studied elementary Latin, anybody was thought good enough for them. As a result, they began in slipshod ways and have floundered ever since. I am no pessimist. I do not believe that this is the worst of all possible worlds, or that our Latin instruction is the worst possible instruction that could be given in the subject. On the other hand I am convinced that we do a great deal that is excellent, and that we are capable of great things. But I am equally convinced that these results will not come of themselves. They demand toil—above all they demand conscience and a thorough dedication to one's work, particularly at the initial stages of instruction.

The importance of careful training in the very earliest stages has yet another justification to Quintilian's mind. He is clearly of the opinion that many a Roman lad had failed to develop his latent powers purely as a result of defective teaching. The proper attitude, he insists, is to assume that every youth is one of promise, and that if he fails to realize it, it is simply because proper pains were not taken by the teacher. It would probably be dangerous to press this too far as a working principle. We cannot ignore differences of natural

endowment; nor can we forget that the inevitable dullard is always with us. Yet there is a large grain of wholesome truth in what Quintilian says. How many of us have seen the slow and apparently hopeless pupil quickened into new life and ambition by the skill and sympathy of the wise teacher! Quintilian, I am sure, was no visionary when he said that the best instruction was quite as important for the slow and dull as for the more apt and intelligent. And if this was true for Rome in the first century of our era, how much more important is it for us with our advanced democracy in the twentieth century!

One of the burning problems in America in recent years has been the teaching of elementary Latin. Evidently the same problem was a living one at Rome in 90 A. D., and it is particularly interesting and, I think, instructive to note what Quintilian has to say on this subject. To those of us who have often deplored the failure to make a determined, decisive attack upon the paradigms and to master them thoroughly at the very outset of Latin study—to such it must cause no little pleasure to note the wise words of Quintilian on this very point. In the fourth chapter of his first book we read these words:

Let boys in the first place learn to decline nouns and conjugate verbs; for otherwise they will never come to an understanding of what is to follow; an admonition which it would be superfluous to give, were it not that most teachers, through ostentatious haste, begin where they ought to leave off; and while they wish to show off their pupils in matters of greater display, they retard their progress.

Has not Quintilian admirably diagnosed the difficulty that has beset us here in America in the last score of years? Have we not been attempting to make pupils understand continuous Latin before mastering the elements that compose it? Have we not been guilty of an ostentatious haste, beginning where we ought to end? I fear we have, and consequently I took no little satisfaction recently when one of our leading educators singled out the passage I have just quoted and declared that it ought to be blazoned in every Latin classroom. Certainly, if to Roman boys such grammatical study was a necessary preliminary to an effective mastery of their native tongue, to modern boys the necessity is a fortiori vastly greater.

As to the educative value of grammar in general, Quintilian boldly vindicates it from being the dry and profitless study that it is often alleged to be. And here again his teaching, I think, has a lesson

for us today. So far from being arid and useless, the study of grammar contributes richly to the intellectual expansion of the pupil in many ways. The apprehension of grammatical relationships involves as serious a logical discipline as a proposition in Euclid, with the added advantage that Euclid is not often directly practical to the everyday man, while an apprehension of logical relationships is.

Exceedingly valuable, too, is the insight afforded by grammar into the psychology of language, its life and growth. Many of the conventional means of expression are really illogical, and have been determined in their form by analogy, which is a hardly less potent factor in syntax than in sounds and forms. For human speech was not primarily a creation of the logician, but an emanation from, and an evolution of, the folk-consciousness. The same forces that brought it into existence determined in the main its entire future career, and forever precluded the existence of an ideally perfect and consistent scheme of expression. What we see in language, therefore, is largely the waywardness and inaccuracy of the popular mind. Rightly apprehended, then, grammar in its manifold phases takes us into the secret history of the human intellect, and shows its most diverse functions in actual play. It is no exaggeration to say that the history of a people is writ large in the people's speech; and the study of grammar is but the study of this speech.

Another fundamental question that has agitated the waters of modern teaching has concerned the function of memory in education. Beginning some twenty years ago, the tendency has since been strong to neglect this important faculty. The new attitude was not without reasons. There had undoubtedly grown up in many schools the practice of learning the words for things instead of the things themselves. Certainly nothing is to be said in favor of such a habit, and it is perhaps not surprising that educators began to reason somewhat as follows: "Memorizing has been abused. Therefore we will have no more of it." This programme has been carried out with much tenacity of purpose ever since. But it may fairly be questioned whether the logic that induced the attitude was sound, or the attitude itself was wise. The logic seems defective in this, that it wrongly located the responsibility. The trouble was not that pupils remembered, but that they did not understand. Now, remembering words with-

out understanding the ideas covered by them, is certainly a futile practice. But I can see no harm in remembering things that one does understand. In fact it seems a serious defect in education for a pupil not to form the habit of incorporating as a part of himself large bodies of the matters he studies. It is not enough, I believe, to apprehend and understand; one must also associate the facts apprehended in such a way as to be able to recall them; and to do this the habit must be cultivated before it is established. The only pernicious use of the memory that I am prepared to recognize is a memorizing of symbols while ignoring the things symbolized. But, on the other hand, it seems to my mind vastly pernicious to study large bodies of facts without being able to recall them at need.

Quintilian in his tenth book takes strong ground on this question, devoting an entire chapter to memory.

Some [he says] have thought memory a mere gift of nature, and to nature it is chiefly owing; but it is strengthened like all our other faculties by exercise; and all the study of the orator of which we have hitherto been speaking is ineffectual unless the other parts of it be held together by memory as by an animating principle. All knowledge depends on memory; and we shall be taught to no purpose, if what we learn escapes us. It is the power of memory that brings before us those multitudes of facts which we should always be ready to produce. The memory is accordingly, not without reason, called "the treasury of eloquence." If anyone ask, "What is the art of memory?" my answer must be: "Practice and labor." To learn much by heart, to go over it again, daily if possible, this is the secret. For nothing is so much strengthened by practice or weakened by neglect as memory. Let children, therefore, learn as much as possible by heart from the earliest stages of study, and let everyone, at whatever stage, who applies himself to strengthening the memory by cultivation, resolutely submit to the tedium of going through what has been learned, and of masticating repeatedly the same food, a labor that may be rendered easier, if we begin by learning a few things first; then we may add something new each day, a practice which will cause no sensible increase to our labor, but will lead at length to almost inconceivable results.

But Quintilian expressly warns us against a merely mechanical cultivation of the memory. He regards the logical division and arrangement of the subject-matter as indispensable.

The whole problem of the fitting use of the memory is, I am well aware, one of the most delicate and difficult in the whole field of education. Yet I confess my sympathy and convictions are with

Quintilian in this matter. With him I believe in the careful and formal training of the memory to hold large bodies of facts. I am not willing to trust the impression made by a mere apprehension and understanding of facts, and trust that the wisdom of our educational leaders may come to recognize more than has been done in recent years the importance of this side of education.

I have purposely been somewhat full in reviewing certain fundamentals of education, wherein Quintilian seemed to me particularly instructive for the problems that confront us today. I must now touch more briefly on some matters of less moment which he considers. He is earnest in urging an early beginning of instruction. "Do not wait till a child is in its seventh year!" he says. Everything early acquired helps ultimately, be it never so little. At least, it helps to form the habit of studying. And yet he warns us to have no confidence in precocious children.

That sort of talent [he says] scarcely ever comes to good fruit. Such boys do little things easily, and impelled by assurance, show at once all they can accomplish. But they succeed only in what is ready to their hand. There is no real power behind, or any that rests on deeply fixed roots; they are like seeds which have been scattered on the surface of the ground, and which shoot up prematurely; they are like grass that resembles corn but grows yellow, with empty ears, before the time of harvest. Their efforts give pleasure as compared with their years, but their progress comes to a stand, and our wonder diminishes.

One of the vexed questions of elementary teaching in Quintilian's day concerned the orthography of Latin words—whether to write *adsisto* or *assisto*; *adrideo* or *arrideo*; *inrumpo* or *irrumpo*, etc. The same question has within recent years at times assumed a momentous prominence in the study of elementary Latin in America. To my mind, it introduces a difficulty as gratuitous as it is vexatious. Latin is hard enough, any way, without loading it with a mass of pedantic details to worry and discourage the beginner. Quintilian's advice on this point is most sensible and pertinent. "Write as you speak," he says, "except where custom has otherwise decreed." Elsewhere he tells us that the assimilated pronunciation was in vogue. Evidently he regarded that as the preferable orthography. But he expressly deploras paying much attention to these puerilities, as he calls them. Instruction means something else to him than frittering away time and energy on such trivial formalities. I heartily wish

that we might take the same sensible attitude in our Latin teaching, and not multiply confusion for the pupil by spelling the same word now in one way, now in another, as is often done in our texts—frequently on one and the same page. For myself I hold that Latin exists for the pupil, not the pupil for Latin; and I have consequently regretted not a little in recent years to observe the increasing attention paid by makers of secondary textbooks to the quiddities of scholarship. Even the useful *j* is currently disguised as *i*, till the pupil and—I regret to say—not a few teachers no longer know when the character stands for a vowel and when for a consonant.

Especially sensible also are Quintilian's remarks on pronunciation and diction. He mentions three standards as supported by their various advocates: analogy, authority, and custom. Those who support analogy pronounce a word in a certain way or defend a certain locution because of its resemblance to some other word or some other locution. The votaries of authority appeal to the usage of some great orator, poet, or historian. Quintilian, however, with Horace, declares himself uncompromisingly in favor of custom as the standard to be followed. But evidently right here there is need of caution. There be customs and customs. For Quintilian, custom in speech is the agreement of the educated, just as virtue is the agreement of the good. Here too, I think, we may profit by his wise counsel. With us, I fear, authority asserts excessive claims as to pronunciation and diction. "If you see it in the dictionary, it is so," seems to be the conviction of many of us, and we often look with scant approval on the person who says *isolate*, if we happen to have discovered that the dictionary indorses *isolate*; or upon him who says *scēnic*, if haply the book says *scēnic*. Ought we not to exercise more sense in this matter and content ourselves with following the usage of the cultivated people with whom we associate? I fancy I can see the fine scorn with which the old Roman would visit us, could he witness the condemnation which we often pronounce both secretly and openly upon those whose offense is against the dictionary.

Another observation touches the character of commentaries on Greek and Latin classics studied in Roman schools. Roman education, as you all know, was roughly organized into three grades: elementary, grammatical or secondary, and advanced (the special

training of the orator). Now the grammatical education was singularly like the classical courses of our secondary schools. A Greek or Latin author was made the basis of instruction, and was studied with the same minute care that is customary among us, the main difference being that among the Romans the commentary was given orally by the teacher, whereas today we have printed notes, often freely interspersed with pictures. Evidently many Roman teachers utilized the commentary more for the purposes of displaying their own erudition than for illuminating the contents of the author in hand. Quintilian protests vigorously against this practice, sagely observing that one of the greatest merits of the teacher is not to know everything, or if he does, to keep some of his erudition in reserve. I fancy we are not altogether free from this same fault. Too often the editors of our classical texts appear to have in mind not the large constituency of students who are to use their books, but rather the minute fraction of experts who may review them. Hence we are treated not infrequently to a display of useless learning, wise remarks about manuscripts, the Mediceus, Venetus A, or the Neapolitanus, along with erudite references to German periodicals, Kuhn's *Zeitschrift*, Bezzenberger's *Beiträge*, or the latest Teutonic *Schulprogramm*. These things are right enough in their place, but I, for one, cannot feel that a secondary school text or even the average college text is the place for them. The best scholarship, I believe, will agree with Quintilian that there are many things which the editor ought not to know (in the sense of not exhibiting his information), and will follow the wise reserve recommended by him.

In view of Quintilian's respect for Greek practice and his devotion to Greek ideals, it is somewhat surprising to note his attitude toward physical training. Nowhere does he emphasize the notion of *mens sana in corpore sano*; nor apparently does he esteem physical training except so far as, when pursued judiciously and to a limited degree, it may give the future orator a graceful carriage and easy command of his person. It would be interesting to know whether this attitude met with more approval from his contemporaries than such sentiments would command today.

Particularly gratifying is Quintilian's plea for a liberal education. To his mind clearly, true education demands that the student should

aim to realize himself and to become a well-rounded man. Nor must education be conducted with reference to the eventual financial return it may bring in. "I would not wish to have," he declares, "even as a reader of this work, a man who would compute what returns his studies bring in. But he who shall have conceived, as with a divine power of imagination, the very idea of genuine oratory, and who shall keep before his eyes true eloquence, the 'queen of the world' as an eminent poet calls her, and who shall seek his gain not from the pay that he receives for his pleadings, but from his own mind and from contemplation and knowledge—a gain that is enduring and independent of fortune—such a man will easily prevail on himself to devote to study the time which others spend at shows, at dice, or in idle talk, to say nothing of sleep. And how much more pleasure will he secure from such pursuits than from unintellectual gratifications! For Divine Providence has ordained that the more honorable occupations are also the most pleasing." Could one find anywhere a loftier idealism? I doubt it.

Nor to Quintilian's mind is education solely for the individual. To him it is not merely a means of self-realization. Its ultimate purpose is much higher and nobler. With a true Roman sense of the majesty and supremacy of the state, he emphasizes the final function of education—the making of useful citizens, who shall conserve and propagate the inheritance of the fathers. Do we today, I wonder, always see as clearly and as steadily the connection between education and the state?

In another connection, he warns against premature specialization. Only the well-rounded man, the one already master of many things, may safely undertake to specialize in oratory. Hence I have small doubt that Quintilian would accord scant approval to the narrow specializing tendency so strong among us at present. Our colleges are full, we have large faculties of able and devoted men, but I often ask myself whether the existing academic spirit is as good as it was a quarter of a century ago before our broad application of the elective system (if that is not dignifying our prevailing practice with too respectful a designation),—before the broad application of election had become so firmly rooted among us. Is not the tendency today to neglect the admirable Hellenic ideal of individual realization, and to make one's

studies merely so many tools for the subsequent career of activity contemplated, neglecting everything that does not seem to contribute immediately and directly to that end? Experience makes me think there is a real danger here; one, too, that not merely threatens us but actually surrounds us on all sides. Quintilian tells us that it threatened the society of his day as well. "Why," asked the impatient Philistines of his time, "should the prospective orator learn geometry? Why learn music? Why learn anything outside the strictest limits of his professional calling?" Quintilian's answer, given in the spirit of his master, Cicero, is that the object is not to train up some mediocre orator, but the best. It was an ideal he had before his mind; and to produce such a man the broadest possible training was indispensable.

We have been considering thus far rather the intellectual side of education. Before closing, I wish very briefly to touch on certain ethical phases of Quintilian's work. He believes in a wisely regulated rivalry between pupils, in definite rewards for excellence, and in incentives to industry, holding evidently, as someone has well said, that "man is a competitive animal, and that history does not warrant the assertion that he loses any portion of the spirit of strife and contention whilst he wanders in the groves of the Academy."

It is manifestly these considerations that determine Quintilian's decided preference for instruction in a school rather than under a private tutor at home. At home, he feels, there is no opportunity for that noble emulation of others, which in his own case, he assures us, was so large a factor in his education that it counted more than all the admonitions of teachers, the oversight of *paedagogi*, or the anxious ambitions of parents.

For corporal punishment he has only the severest condemnation. In his scheme of education the *ferula* has no place. Blows are for slaves; to the free-born they can be but an insult and a disgrace. Boys whose dispositions can be controlled only by such sanctions are of too inferior a sort to give promise of future usefulness.

It is extremely interesting also to note the emphasis which Quintilian lays on early home influences. He deplores the effect of too much parental indulgence, charging Roman fathers and mothers with themselves corrupting the characters of their children. "We enervate

their very infancy with luxuries," he declares. "Our excessive fondness weakens all their powers, both of mind and body. We form their palates before we form their speech. They grow up in sedan-chairs; if they touch the ground, they hang by the hands of attendants supporting them on either side. We even encourage their saucy utterances by bestowing a smile and a kiss." A recent writer has suggested that here in America there may just possibly be traces of a similar state of affairs, which he characterizes as "a case of too much parent." But I have already drawn so many parallels between ancient and modern life that I hesitate to dwell at length upon another.

As regards practical teaching, Quintilian cautions us against instruction that is exclusively acroamatic. To be successful, it must be erotematic, too; *minus enim valent praecepta quam experimenta*. He urges, also, that the teacher, in imparting instruction, must constantly take account of the individual peculiarities of the pupil. In other words, he recognizes that all teaching is simply constant skilful adaptation. I have elsewhere called attention to what seems to me a dangerous inference, likely to be drawn, and certainly not infrequently drawn, in connection with modern pedagogy; and I may perhaps not be departing too far from my theme if I say again that teaching is not the application of a method, but that, as Quintilian reminds us, it is constant adaptation to the problem momentarily in hand. It is the very reverse of anything and everything mechanical. It therefore does not submit to the definite formulation of a method capable of general application. The two essentials of the teacher are a knowledge of his subject and skill in this momentary adaptation. Accordingly, when I note the prodigious emphasis often laid upon "method" in preparation for the profession of teaching, I feel warranted in saying that such emphasis is of doubtful wisdom, since it involves the assumption that knowledge is of less account than method, and that method either necessarily carries with it capacity for the skilful adaptation requisite in teaching or is even superior to it.

I cannot conclude without mentioning the superb grace and poise, as well as the cogency and dignity, with which Quintilian's sentiments and convictions are expressed. To those who would canonize Cicero as the one real writer of Latin prose, Quintilian, despite his obvious and professed following of that master, must seem infected with

decided symptoms of the "Decline." We find in him new words new meanings of old words, new syntactical constructions, new phrases, to say nothing of other novelties. Yet these, after all, are very slight things. Like every other writer of every age and every country, Quintilian as a stylist must stand or fall, not according to his conformity, or lack of conformity, to the vocabulary, syntax, and sentence-structure of bygone generations, but solely as he says what he says with clearness, force, and grace. Judged by this standard, he has few peers in all Roman literature. His work throughout is pervaded with a lofty earnestness. Nor does he lose himself in mere abstract analysis. He abounds in copious illustrations, and is especially happy in the freshness and aptness with which he undertakes to enforce some vital truth. Take this, for instance, where he is speaking of certain arid treatises on oratory:

These break and cut down whatever is noble in eloquence; they drink up, so to speak, all the blood of thought and lay bare the bones, which, while they ought to exist and to be united by their ligaments, should nevertheless be covered with flesh.

Speaking of memory, he says:

We are most tenacious of what we have imbibed in our early years, as the flavor with which you scent vessels when new remains in them; nor can the colors of wool which has lost its whiteness be effaced.

Sometimes the comparisons are quaint and homely, as where he says:

For as narrow-necked vessels reject a great quantity of the liquid that is poured upon them, but are filled by that which flows or is poured into them by degrees, so it is for us to ascertain how much the mind of boys can receive, since what is too much for their grasp of intellect will not enter their minds, as not being sufficiently expanded to receive it.

Now and again there are pregnant embodiments of truth in quasi-proverbial form, as where he says (x. 3. 4), *Nihil enim natura voluit magnum effici cito praeponitque pulcherrimo cuique operi difficultatem*, "Nature will have nothing accomplished quickly; difficulty lies in the path of every noble achievement." Or, again, when he says, "Let the motto be: 'First, flawless accuracy; then flawless speed.'"

There are touches of pathos, too. Few things in literature are finer and tenderer than the preface to the sixth book, in which Quintilian laments the loss of the faithful wife and the two promising boys

who had been the solace of his existence, a passage too long to quote and which will not bear dismemberment.

You have borne patiently with me in these observations on the old Roman schoolmaster. With me, I trust, you recognize the greatness of the man and the value of his contribution to educational thought. It is refreshing to find the eternal verities of education stated and emphasized by him as admirably as has ever been done. It is a pleasure to contemplate the thorough idealism of the man himself. Born and living in an age when luxury was rife and when material standards were claiming, as never before in Roman history, the adoration of men, Quintilian boldly proclaims the value of education for its own sake and for the sake of the state, and protests against making it merely the means of sordid worldly advantage. "Get the best," he tells us; "Begin right;" "Be careful in details;" "Have respect for every pupil;" "Blame yourself as a teacher, if your pupils fail." Then his sturdy common sense appeals to us, as he brushes aside the details of trivial formalities, or as he utters his scorn of those with whom teaching becomes merely a vanity—an opportunity for the display of erudition. In a word, he interprets teaching in the broadest and humanest fashion. He has a noble reverence for the human spirit, and would have the teacher share and apply this same reverence in the actual work of instruction.

It was in the winter of 1415-16 that Poggio Bracciolini discovered at St. Gall, in Switzerland, the first complete manuscript of Quintilian's famous *Institutio*. Till then only fragments of the work had been known. Poggio and his fellow-humanists, we are told, greeted the new discovery with the greatest enthusiasm; and we may well recognize that they had full reason for so doing, for the world cannot afford to lose the utterances of those simple, sincere souls whose vision of truth is clear and steady, and whose hope and faith are fixed on what is spiritual and enduring.